

REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance of the above-identified application are respectfully requested. Claims 15, 16, 18-23, 25 and 27-42 are now pending, wherein claims 15, 16, 25 and 41 are amended, claims 24 and 26 are canceled and claim 42 is new.

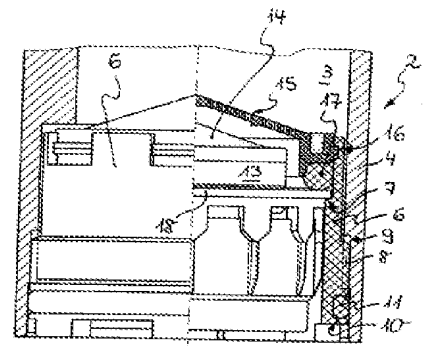
Applicants would like to thank Examiner Cernoch for his time and courtesy during the personal interview conducted with inventor Christoph Weis and the undersigned attorney. The discussion below summarizes the issues discussed during the personal interview.

Claims 15, 16 and 18-41 are rejected for obviousness under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) in view of the combination of U.S. Patent No. 4,534,514 to Agnides et al. ("Agnides") and U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0084353 to Griffin et al. ("Griffin"). This ground of rejection is respectfully traversed.

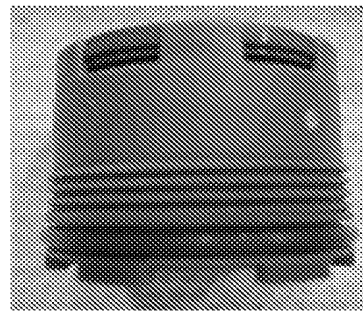
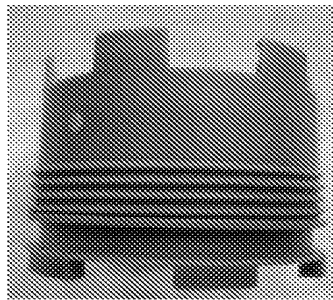
Independent claim 15 is amended consistent with the discussions during the personal interview to recite that the hollow, cylindrical sleeve-shaped intermediate holder (6) includes:

an annular groove holding an annular seal that provides a seal in the radial direction between the intermediate holder (6) and an inner periphery of the fitting outlet (4)

The claimed intermediate holder 6 with the annular groove 10 that holds the annular seal 11 is illustrated in, for example, Fig. 1 of the present application (reproduced on the right).

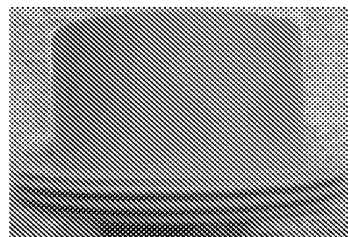
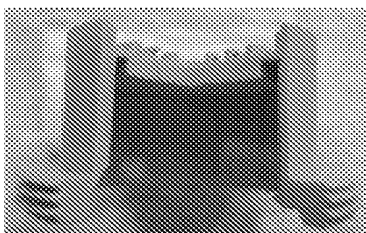


Mock-ups of the claimed insertion cartridge and intermediate holder with an annual groove holding an annular seal were presented during the personal interview. The photograph reproduced on the lower left illustrates the mock-up of the intermediate holder with the annual groove exposed and the photograph reproduced on the lower right illustrates the mock-up of the insertion cartridge with the annual seal inserted into the annual groove of the intermediate holder.

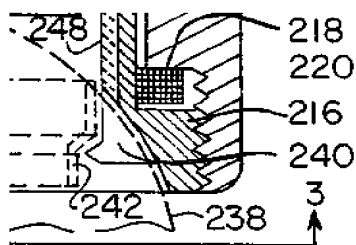


As discussed during the personal interview the combination of Aghnides and Griffin does not disclose or suggest an intermediate holder with an annular groove that holds an annual seal as recited in amended claim 15.

Photographs of the mock-ups of Aghnides' aerator are reproduce below, where the photograph on the lower left is a mock-up with a cut-out to illustrate the cross-section of the aerator and on the mock-up on the lower right illustrates the complete aerator. As discussed during the interview, these mock-ups illustrate that the aerator of Aghnides does not include an annual groove or an annual seal.

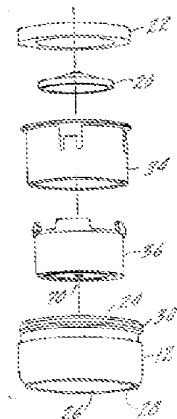


The annular groove and annular seal were previously recited in canceled claim 24, and the rejection of that claim relied upon seal 218 of Aghnides as disclosing the features of claim 24. As also discussed during the personal interview and as illustrated in the enlarged view of Aghnides' aerator presented during the personal interview and reproduced below, seal 218 is not in an annual groove. Instead, seal 218 rests in the corner formed by the aerator threads.

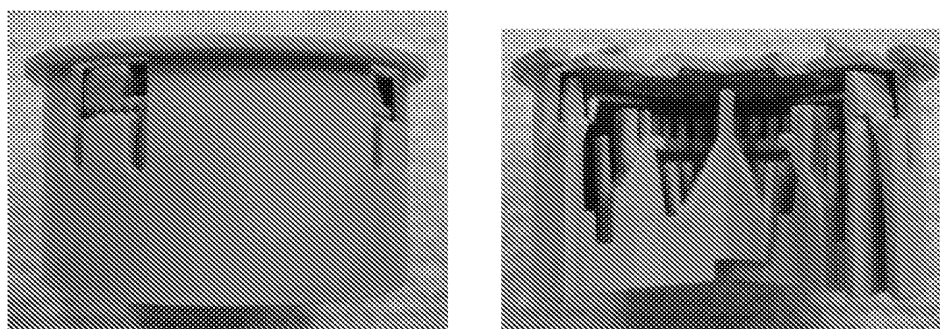


Additionally, seal 218 does not “seal in the radial direction” as recited in amended claim 15. Instead, as illustrated on the right, seal 218 seals in the axial direction. As discussed during the personal interview, one skilled in the art would not have been motivated to arrange seal 218 to seal in the radial direction because seal 218 is arranged within the area of the spout's threads and such a radial seal would make it difficult to engage the aerator within the spout.

Griffin, like Aghnides, does not disclose or suggest the claimed intermediate holder with an annular groove holding an annular seal. The rejection relies upon outer throttle member 34 of Griffin as corresponding to the claimed intermediate holder. As also discussed during the personal interview and as illustrated in FIG. 2 of Griffin reproduced on the right, the upper throttle member 34 of Griffin's aerator does not include an annular groove that holds an annular seal. The



absence of an annual groove and annual seal can also be seen in the photographs of the mock-ups of Griffin's aerator (reproduced below) that were presented during the personal interview. The mock-up on the lower left illustrates the outer throttle member 34 and the mock-up on the lower right illustrates a cut-away view of a cross-section of the aerator illustrating the arrangement of the inner and outer throttle members.



Because Aghnides and Griffin each do not disclose or suggest an intermediate holder with an annular groove holding an annual seal that seals in the radial direction, the combination of Aghnides and Griffin does not render claim 15 obvious. Independent claim 41 is amended to recite similar elements to those discussed above with regard to claim 15, and is patentably distinguishable over the combination of Aghnides and Griffin for similar reasons. The dependent claims are patentably distinguishable at least by virtue of their dependency.

New claim 42 recites similar elements to those discussed above with regard to claim 15 and is patentably distinguishable for similar reasons.

If there are any questions regarding this response or the application in general, a telephone call to the undersigned would be appreciated since this should expedite the prosecution of the application for all concerned.

If necessary to effect a timely response, this paper should be considered as a petition for an Extension of Time sufficient to effect a timely response, and please charge any deficiency in fees or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 05-1323 (Docket # 105433.62118US).

Respectfully submitted,

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